

Need chakri? RENT A TUKRI!

|| SHAHEEN MOLLAH and HASAN MEER ||



Porters ready to carry goods in their baskets, from a truck at Karwan Bazar. Below, they rent those from this depot for Tk 20 apiece.

PHOTO: STAR

This is pretty much what Shahin Alam heard, when he arrived at Karwan Bazar in search of work.

The 30-year-old Sirajganj native had lost everything to river erosion and in desperation, came to the capital recently.

But things were not easy. He tried his luck in construction, transport and garment sectors, but to no avail.

"All I had left was Tk 100. I came to Karwan Bazar, not knowing what to do. It was late at night but the area was abuzz with activity. I saw workers unloading goods from trucks and delivering those to merchants," Shahin said.

So he started asking around. "They told me I can get work here but I have to rent a tukri [wicker basket] first."

One of the workers turned out to be from his village. "He took me to the 'Arot Bhaban' [dry goods depot] and introduced me to a person there. He wrote down my name and took Tk 20 from me and handed me a basket. He said after I was done, I have to return

it to him."

"That's how I started working as a porter at this market," a busy Shahin told these correspondents recently, in between delivering goods. "I remember, I made Tk 300 that

arduous, it's not complicated nor do I have to face any hassle," he added. "I can support my family with the money I make," said Shahin.

This newspaper visited the market multiple times over the

haggling in the dank alleys, the market is quite a sight.

Meanwhile, amid the constant shouting of merchants, workers pushing and shoving anything and everything on their way and buyers complaining of being charged extra or not getting a better deal, Sumon Hawladar -- with a basket filled with coriander leaves loaded on his head -- was seen completing a delivery.

The 35-year-old was a busy man to talk to. He had to take the produce to a nearby shop, unload the herb and then come back for another round.

For Sumon, this will continue till dawn. He has been working as a porter for over nine years.

He said he used to be a caretaker at a building in Dhanmondi back in 2010. He left the job after an argument with one of the owners.

"I searched for work in Dhaka and Gazipur but could not find any. One of my acquaintances brought me here

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night."

Shahin said he works from midnight to 8am -- unloading and delivering goods -- and for each trip, depending on distance and weight, he makes around Tk 40.

"Even though the job is

week. The visits were made after midnight and each time, the largest kitchen and wholesale market in the city was gearing up to pull an all-nighter.

With trucks unloading goods, vendors busy arranging commodities and buyers

It's all too loud

Noise levels higher than permissible everywhere in Dhaka; secretariat area the worst-affected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It seems practically impossible to find an area inside Dhaka without noise pollution, as evident by a recent study -- that collected data from 70 neighbourhoods in the city and found sound levels higher than permissible levels in every one of them.

Findings of the study, by Center for Atmospheric Pollution Studies (CAPS), were disclosed at a press conference organised by Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa) at Dhaka Reporters' Unity yesterday.

The extent of sound pollution in the secretariat area still is uncontrolled, although the government on December 17 last year declared it a "silent area".

Presenting the study, Dr Ahmad Kamruzzaman Majumder -- professor of Environmental Science at Stamford

University -- said people from almost all areas including silent, residential and mixed categories in the city are facing noise pollution.

In the secretariat area, he said they found the lowest level of sound at 99.5 decibels (dB) at Shikha Bhaban area, and the highest of 124.1 dB at Paltan bus stand.

The standard noise level should be within 50 dB in a silent zone, according to Bangladesh's noise pollution guidelines.

The data was collected using sound level meters during daytime at 12 spots surrounding the secretariat area, and other places of the capital between December 14 to 22 last year, Dr Kamruzzaman added.

Chairing the press conference, Bapa Executive Vice President Dr Md Abdul Matin termed vehicle horns the main

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First convocation of JnU today

JNU CORRESPONDENT

After 14 long years of the institution's establishment, Jagannath University (JnU) is set to hold its first convocation today, and graduates will finally get to relish the much-awaited event.

"The university authorities have made grand preparations marking the auspicious event," JnU Vice Chancellor Mijanur Rahman told The Daily Star yesterday.

It had not been possible to arrange the convocation due to various complexities, he said. "We have faced great challenges to organise the huge programme, but this time we overcame the hurdles and were successful," he added.

The programme will be held on the university's Dhupkhola ground around 12pm. The whole campus has been beautifully decorated with lights, banners and festoons. A cultural show will be organised marking the day where JnU students and teachers will perform.

President Md Abdul Hamid, also JnU's chancellor, will preside over the grand event, while Professor Emeritus of Rajshahi University Dr Arun Kumar Basak will attend it as the convocation speaker.

Generally, at university convocations, gold medals are awarded to some graduates for their outstanding results. Unfortunately, no one will get medals at the event, JnU officials said.

When asked about the matter, Mijanur said they do not have sufficient funds in the university's trust for medals.

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Death anniv of Justice Habibur Rahman today

CITY DESK

T o d a y marks the sixth death anniversary of Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman, who served as the chief of the caretaker government prior to the 1996 general election.

Born on December 3, 1928, Rahman was a language movement veteran, a teacher at Dhaka University and Rajshahi University, and author of 95 books on topics including politics, religion and works of Rabindranath Tagore.

He was appointed chief justice in February 1995.

The Ekushey Padak laureate passed away on this day in 2014 due to old-age complications at the age of 85.



No room for autocracy in Bangladesh: Dr Kamal

UNB, Dhaka

Stating that there is no room for autocracy in independent Bangladesh, Jatiya Oikyafront convener Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday said people must take risks to protect democracy.

Speaking at a discussion, he also said creating obstacles to holding a fair and credible election is tantamount to disgracing martyrs of the Liberation War.

"Bangabandhu had sought democracy, but there's no democracy in our country now as we accepted autocracy instead of independence. Sometimes, risk needs to be taken for protecting democracy, and we've to take that risk this time," Dr Kamal said.

Gonoforum arranged the programme at Jatiya Press Club, marking Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Homecoming Day.

Dr Kamal, also the president of Gonoforum, said he was "very fortunate to have got the chance to work as an activist of a great leader like Bangabandhu Sheikh

Mujibur Rahman".

"As long as Bangladesh remains, people of the country will remember him and respect him. He liberated the country and made people its owners. It's written in the constitution signed by him that people are country's owners. We achieved the independence as we got an outstanding leader like Bangabandhu," he observed.

Mentioning that Bangabandhu never compromised with injustice and unfairness, the Oikyafront chief said, "We must put up a resistance against unfairness. There's no scope for autocracy in Bangladesh."

Dr Kamal said Father of the Nation Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had given the guidelines through the constitution so people can enjoy their basic rights.

He said the constitution signed by Bangabandhu should be shown to students of every school and college. "Depriving people of democracy and their basic and voting rights means defying

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DHAKA CITY CORPORATION ELECTIONS

AL will abide by polls code: Quader

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said Awami League leaders and activists will abide by the code of conduct of the Election Commission (EC) in the Dhaka city corporation polls.

"We have given directives to our leaders and activists in this regard. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has asked ministers not to violate electoral codes by any means," he told a discussion after inaugurating a portrait of Bangabandhu at Roads and Highways Department.

Quader also said he is abiding by the code as a minister and lawmaker.

About BNP's allegation over level playing field, Quader said, "What is a level playing field? Does it mean BNP secretary general can hold a public meeting but AL general secretary cannot? BNP leaders Moudud Ahmed and

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Four councillors elected unopposed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two ward councillor candidates and two other candidates for reserved women councillor seats in Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) have been elected unopposed.

They are: Anwar Iqbal of ward-25, Arif Hossain of ward-43, Nargis Mahtab (reserved seat) of ward-6, and Nilufar Rahman (reserved seat) of ward-8. They all are supported by the ruling Awami League.

Returning Officer Abdul Baten said they found single candidate in those four positions on Thursday after the withdrawal of candidacy.

"We have informed the candidates of their unopposed win," he said.

According to Election Commission, a total of seven candidates are vying for mayoral, 335 for general ward councillor and 82 for reserved women councillor posts in DSCC election, to be held on January 30.

Fake currency factory busted in Dhanmondi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday busted a fake currency-manufacturing factory in the capital's Dhanmondi.

Rab members also claimed to have seized fake notes of more than Tk 1 crore and counterfeiting equipment, and detained two people in this connection.

They are: Saiful Islam (44) and Shah Alam (45).

Maj Shahriar Ziaur Rahman, second-in-command of Rab-10, told

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AND SO IT BEGINS... Mayoral candidates for elections to DNCC and DSCC received their electoral symbols yesterday and got busy campaigning right away. From left, holding sheaves of paddy -- electoral symbol of BNP -- Tabitha Awal speaks to journalists in Uttara sector-7. Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh (Awami League) distributes leaflets in Derma. Flanked by senior party leaders, Ishraque Hossain (BNP) campaigns near Baitul Mukarram National Mosque. Atiqul Islam (AL) greets prospective voters in Uttara sector-4 after Juma prayers.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

The Daily Star
21st 'O' & 'A' Level
Awards Presentation Ceremony, 2018-2019

Announcement for 'O' & 'A' Level Private Candidates and Schools

Private Candidates
Private candidates who fulfill the criteria described below are requested to register their names at The Daily Star office for inclusion as awardees. The criteria to be fulfilled are as follows:

Criteria for 'O' Level
Minimum 6 (six) 'A' grades in two consecutive sittings from **May/June 2018 to May/June 2019** for Edexcel and **May/June 2018 to October/November 2019** for Cambridge.

Criteria for 'A' Level
Minimum 3 (three) 'A' grades in two consecutive sittings from **May/June 2018 to May/June 2019** for Edexcel and **May/June 2018 to October/November 2019** for Cambridge.

Eligible candidates are requested to contact The Daily Star, (64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Level-5, Dhaka-1215), with their original results certificates and a photocopy and 2 (two) passport-size photographs in person by 20th January 2020, anytime between 11:00 am to 5:00 pm (Except Fridays and Saturdays). Please do contact +8801786111100, before coming to The Daily Star office.

Schools
Any school that has students meeting the above criteria but has not been contacted by The Daily Star (i.e. has not been informed of the first scheduled meeting through regular post, email or phone) is requested to contact The Daily Star (64-65, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Level-5, Dhaka-1215), on the aforementioned dates and times or email at a.level.sb@gmail.com by 31st January 2020, with:

- The name of the school, phone number and name of a responsible representative and a valid email address that is checked regularly.

The schools are also requested to promptly prepare a list of the candidates meeting the above criteria, the number of 'A'/'A*' grades achieved by each candidate, and photocopies of results certificates for each candidate.

No registration will be allowed or accepted after 5:00 pm of 31st January 2020.
NOTE: If you know of any private candidate(s) or school(s) that may be unaware of this, please pass on the above information to them so that we may include them in this ceremony.

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